

White House

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OUTLINE OF PROPOSED MEMORANDUM TO BE DELIVERED TO COLONEL GODPASTER
BY 10 A.M. JUNE 19.

SUBJECT: The Argentine Revolt

(1) Since the commencement of hostilities on 16 June, the Peron government has elapsed an official blackout on communication from the Argentine and there have been no commercial cable or telephone communications from there. Available information, therefore, has either been released by the Peron government or has been received from Uruguay sources.

(2) Sources in Uruguay report that the present plot was conceived in February in conversations between high Naval, Air, and Army officials. By May the reports stated they had the full support of the Navy and Air and 55% of the Army. They also claim the support of the Argentine police.

(3) The leader of the revolt is believed to be Brigadier General Bengoa, at present reported in Rosario, which the rebels claim is under their control. General Bengoa was, until the outbreak of the revolt, Commander of the First Division and he is known to be a man of high integrity and with a reputation of non-participation in political affairs. He is also believed to have considerable influence among other leaders of the Army.

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(4) Admiral Oliviere, Minister of the Argentine Navy, until the commencement of the revolt, is now reported to be in Puerto Belgrano, the principal naval establishment of the Argentine Navy and is to be in control of that installation and receiving strong naval support. Reports from Uruguay intimate that the Argentine Fleet is fully stocked with fuel, ammunition, and provisions and will probably attack Buenos Aires in the near future.

(5) It is of some interest to note that the State of Cordova, long a stronghold of anti-Peron Catholicism, is the principal center of air force training and the most important air base in Argentina is located at Cordova, the capital of the State.

(6) The ground force strength as of 1 September 1954 is estimated at 102,000. The bulk of the army is deployed roughly in an arc around the upper half of Argentina. At the present time it is believed that there are about 22,000 troops in Buenos Aires including one motorized division, one armored division, two regiments, and some tactical units within army schools. The naval strength as of middle '54, including the naval air arm, is estimated at 28,000. The combat effectiveness of the air arm is not considered high and consists of 74 training aircraft, 12 patrol aircraft, 19 transport aircraft, and 25 liaison aircraft, none of modern type. The air force as of recent date had a strength of 16,000, equipped with 84 jet fighters, 56 combat fighters, 24 medium bombers, 124 transport

317 trainers, 30 reconnaissance aircraft. There are said to be approximately 370 aircraft in tactical units. Much of the equipment is British.

(7) In addition to the two air attacks on the government buildings on 16 June, there are reports of mortar and artillery attacks against the government and there have been reports of considerable casualties in Buenos Aires and reports, also unconfirmed from Uruguay, as of early 18 June, state that disorders have been confined in Buenos Aires and Rosario and that the British Embassy in Buenos Aires has been violated by rioters. Peron, himself, has repeatedly announced that the government is in control of the situation but that a state of siege exists in Argentina. His repeated attempts at reassurance must be reviewed with some skepticism.

(8) While facts are lacking to appraise the situation with any degree of confidence, it is possible that the revolt may assume major proportions and even if the principal elements of the army remain loyal to Peron, a civil war of considerable proportions may well face the government.